

**§ 136-44.27. North Carolina Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program.**

(a) There is established the Elderly and Disabled Transportation Assistance Program that shall provide State financed elderly and disabled transportation services for counties within the State. The Department of Transportation is designated as the agency of the State responsible for administering State funds appropriated to purchase elderly and disabled transportation services for counties within the State. The Department shall develop appropriate procedures regarding the distribution and use of these funds and shall adopt rules to implement these procedures. No funds appropriated pursuant to this act may be used to cover State administration costs.

(b) For the purposes of this section, an elderly person is defined as one who has reached the age of 60 or more years, and a disabled person is defined as one who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, an individual who has a record of such impairment, or an individual who is regarded as having such an impairment. Certification of eligibility shall be the responsibility of the county.

(c) All funds distributed by the Department under this section are intended to purchase additional transportation services, not to replace funds now being used by local governments for that purpose. These funds are not to be used towards the purchase of transportation vehicles or equipment. To this end, only those counties maintaining elderly and disabled transportation services at a level consistent with those in place on January 1, 1987, shall be eligible for additional transportation assistance funds.

(d) The Public Transportation Division of the Department of Transportation shall distribute these funds to the counties according to the following formula: fifty percent (50%) divided equally among all counties; twenty-two and one-half percent (22 1/2%) based upon the number of elderly residents per county as a percentage of the State's elderly population; twenty-two and one-half percent (22 1/2%) based upon the number of disabled residents per county as a percentage of the State's disabled population; and, the remaining five percent (5%) based upon a population density factor that recognizes the higher transportation costs in sparsely populated counties.

(e) Funds distributed by the Department under this section shall be used by counties, public transportation authorities, or regional public transportation authorities in a manner consistent with transportation development plans which have been approved by the Department and the Board of County Commissioners. To receive funds apportioned for a given fiscal year, a county shall have an approved transportation development plan. Funds that are not obligated in a given fiscal year due to the lack of such a plan will be distributed to the eligible counties based upon the distribution formula prescribed by subsection (d) of this section.

(f) A regional public transportation authority created pursuant to Article 25 or Article 26 of Chapter 160A of the General Statutes may, upon written agreement with the municipalities served by a public transportation authority or counties served by the regional public transportation authority, apply for and receive any funds to which the member municipality or counties are entitled to receive based on the distribution formula set out in subsection (d) of this section. (1987 (Reg. Sess., 1988), c. 1095, ss. 1(a), 1(b); c. 1101, s. 8.2; 1989, c. 752, s. 105(b); 1993, c. 321, s. 147; 2011-207, s. 1.)